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Romantic Satanism and the Rise of Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry

Adriana Craciun*

For this history has been adopted by both parties.
—William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

"I AM SICK OF HEARING of the sublimity of Milton," wrote Mary Wollstonecraft in 1787.[1] And yet the romantic revival of Milton would really come into its own with the publication of William Hayley's *Life of Milton* in 1796, inspired by an extraordinary artistic gathering that produced some of romanticism's most important contributions to the Milton revival. Despite Wollstonecraft's impatience with the clichéd "reputation of taste" that Milton had already acquired, many of her contemporaries (particularly women) regarded Milton as a populist alternative to the classical tradition. Poets like William Cowper, Charlotte Smith, and William Wordsworth were indebted to *Paradise Lost* in their own major blank-verse poems, *The Task* (1785), *The Emigrants* (1793), and *The Prelude* (1799). During the summer of 1792, Smith and Cowper joined a collaborative literary retreat at Hayley's villa in Eartham, Sussex. Cowper and Hayley were producing competing editions of *Paradise Lost* (Hayley for Boydell, Cowper for Joseph Johnson), and began a joint translation of Anderini's *Adamo*, rumored to be a plagiarized source for Satan's speeches. Cowper's edition was to be illustrated with engravings after Henry Fuseli's paintings from his "Milton's Gallery," although Cowper abandoned his edition while annotating the early books of *Paradise Lost*, crippled by fears of his own damnation. William Blake, who was engraving works in Johnson's press at this time, probably saw Fuseli's innovative visions of Satan as sublimely heroic, inspiring his own masterpieces in this tradition, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and his illustrations of *Paradise Lost*. Fuseli's and Blake's connections to the literary productions of the Eartham retreat situate that group at the pictorial as well as literary origins of romantic Satanism.

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Charlotte Smith thrived in this ideal example of romantic sociability, exploring in *The Emigrants*, which she dedicated to Cowper, her own theodicy: "Man, misguided Man, / Mars the fair work that he was bid enjoy, / And makes himself the evil he deplores."[2] Set immediately before and after the execution of Louis XVI and the outbreak of war in 1793, *The Emigrants* is, like *Paradise Lost*, a post-Revolutionary meditation on exile, and the poet's allegiance to "liberty" (and unpopular affiliations with republicanism). In March 1793, Smith sent Cowper *The Emigrants*, requesting revisions. Cowper recommended sharpening the poem's political sympathies: "the Exiles themselves cannot be treated with too much tenderness . . . nor the tyrants of Paris with too much severity."[3] Yet in offering such conflicted portraits of the proscribed French aristocrats and clergy, as both victims and oppressors, *The Emigrants* shares much with *Paradise Lost*'s ambivalent meditations on power. *The Emigrants* illustrates nicely Lucy Newlyn's argument that "the Romantics' preference for fallen human values (imagination, suffering, love) as opposed to the stasis of innocence preserved" helps account for their canonization of *Paradise Lost*.[4]

I am interested in a neglected aspect of this ongoing reassessment of Milton's influence on romanticism: women writers' interest in Satan. While women writers' meditations on Eve are better known (via Wollstonecraft, for example), beyond the Satanic masculinity in the gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, and Emily Brontë, scholars have largely neglected women's writings on Satan. Romantic women writers found a surprising range of poetic uses for Milton's Satan, the most significant being a vision of outcast female genius, hurled from the celestial sphere for having claimed equality: a feminist romantic Satanism. In order to better appreciate the rhetorical and aesthetic range of women's revisions of Satan, I will look first at conservative uses of Satan as republican seducer. I will then establish women writers' feminist identification with Satan as outcast genius in writings by Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Mary Wollstonecraft, and others. Before Byron and the Shelleys rediscovered in Satan a conflicted Prometheanism, and long before Robert Southey's reactionary critique of this "Satanic School" in 1821, romantic women writers found in Milton's hero surprising echoes of their own struggles.[5] Romantic-period women's accounts of the rise and fall of Satanic genius necessarily alter our readings of women's poetic identity and ambition, establishing an important link between polemical writers of the 1790s and the sentimental effusions associated with the "poetess" of the 1820s and 1830s.

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Satanic Jacobins

As a consequence of enlightenment and scriptural challenges to orthodox Christianity throughout the eighteenth century, the myth of Satan was desacralized, so that by the end of the eighteenth century, Satan "personified the evil of the opposition, whether revolutionary or reactionary."[6] Conservative Christian writers popularized Satan's temptation of Eve as an allegory of the dangers of reform: "Conscious of the influence of women in civil society," wrote Hannah More, the "modern apostles of infidelity" hold out "the same allurement . . . which was employed by the first philosophist to the first sinner—Knowledge."[7] In novels like Jane West's *A Tale of the Times* (1799) and the anonymous *Dorothea, or a Ray of the New Light* (1801), women are the weak link in this chain of domestic defense, threatening an Edenic Britain with political rebellion. The Satanic villain in *Tale of the Times* is a "fallen angel" motivated solely by envy: "The interesting beauty of the countess . . . excited in the philosophic mind of Fitzosborne nearly the same emotions as those which the arch apostate felt on viewing Adam and Eve in Paradise: and, like him, . . .

> 'Aside he turn'd
> For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
> Ey'd them askance.'"[8]

Yet West's argument is not with the Satanic villain, but with the doltish husband: "Is it not a general advantage, that property should be transferred from an indolent sensualist to an active, intelligent, enterprising citizen, who would turn it to beneficial purpose?" (2.294). In *Dorothea*, this reluctant admiration for Satanic entrepreneurship emerges in the novel's warnings against the "diabolical doctrine" of radical reform.[9] Finding Dorothea happily married, the villain Williams echoes Satan's appeal to Eve's desire for independence: "nor can the free agency of *my* spirit submit to such trammels, which, indeed, I blush and grieve to see have so much power over you. Are you the partner, or the slave of your husband?" (2.56). Thus begins Dorothea's fall through intellectual pride along the trajectory already mapped out by Mary Wollstonecraft, named in the novel as a "genius clouded by pride, and lost, utterly lost, in the track of an unbridled imagination!" (1.129).

What is interesting about the Satanic tempter in *Dorothea* is his vulnerability, as in Milton's conflicted portrait. Wandering through war-torn Ireland during the 1798 rebellion, he repents: "'Oh! . . . that I was yet an humble villager, under my parental roof! or that, content beneath the shelter of family ties, I had remained in security with my wife and

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child!" (2.211). This vision of Satanic masculinity complements Dorothea's role as fallen femininity—both have abandoned divine order for the false promise of liberty. Dorothea ends up alone and near death in a cottage, when she is rescued by her husband—she lives the hellish literalization of women's isolation within the home. The Satanic Williams, who has abandoned both his father's home and his own paternal role, lives out a nightmarish version of the masculine ideal of liberty as homelessness. He predictably brings destruction upon his own head, after the female victim of an uprising he inspired murders him (similarly, West's villain in *Tale of the Times* kills himself).

These conservative allegories of Satanic temptation hint at Satan's seductiveness—political, sexual and intellectual—in order to better serve their didactic purposes of shoring up women's resistance and redeeming Eve. As such, they join earlier eighteenth-century tradition of women's writings on *Paradise Lost* that Joseph Wittreich has unearthed in *Feminist Milton*, wherein "Milton's Eve is enabling for women: . . . If before the Fall Adam gives life to Eve, after the Fall it is Eve who gives life to Adam, who redeems him and history and restores Paradise to both."[10] From her favorite poem, the unmarried More distilled her vision of "the very essence of perfection in a wife," Eve, the "under-agent" of Providence and the guardian of "the most appropriate branch of female knowledge: . . . household good."[11] More's idealization of Eve is representative of this new moral vision of femininity, part of a cultural revolution in which women took leading roles as "mothers of the nation," according to Anne Mellor. But this reappropriation of Eve that we see in More is absent from feminist contemporaries like Wollstonecraft, Robinson, and Smith. In their works we see instead a cool skepticism towards Eve, and a contrasting interest in Satan—a distinctly romantic response that is also politically radical.

The author of *Dorothea, or a Ray of the New Light* was on to something when she likened the first fallen angel and fallen woman to Mary Wollstonecraft: "genius clouded by pride, and lost, utterly lost, in the track of an unbridled imagination!" (1.129). Wollstonecraft's dangerous experiments in love, motherhood, radicalism, and intellectual ambition created about her an aura of forbidden knowledge, which both attracted and repelled contemporaries. In 1794 Anne Grant wrote at length about how Wollstonecraft "speaks in such a strain of seeming piety, and quotes scripture in a manner so applicable and emphatic that you are thrown off your guard." Grant, like Eve before her, was intrigued: "There is a degree of boldness in her conceptions, and masculine energy in her style, that is very imposing. There is a gloomy grandeur in her imagination, while she explores the regions of intellect without chart or compass, which gives one the idea of genius wandering through chaos."[12]

This ambivalently romantic vision of Wollstonecraft as Satan traversing Chaos, and using both scripture and reason to tempt women with

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equality, marks an important point of confluence between opposing political uses of Satan as both heroic revolutionary and willful destroyer. More similarly read Wollstonecraft in the role of Satanic tempter: Wollstonecraft joins "the most destructive class in the whole wide range of modern corrupters, who effect the most desperate work of the passions" through a cold-blooded rationalism, "as in the infernal climate described by Milton" where "'frost performs th'effects of fire'" (quoting *Paradise Lost* 2.585).[13] Conservative visions of a Satanic Wollstonecraft attest to the widespread romantic-period associations of Milton's hero/villain with the claims of women's independence.

Wollstonecraft herself, not her critics, is representative of the romantic women writers who interest me, for she did not share her conservative contemporaries' idealized visions of Eve. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, it was the Adversary himself with whom Wollstonecraft identified, seeing through Milton's domestic paradise: "The domestic trifles of the day have afforded matters for cheerful converse," she writes regarding contemporary (Rousseauvian) visions of women's domesticity. "Similar feelings has Milton's pleasing picture of paradisiacal happiness ever raised in my mind," she continues, "yet, instead of envying the lovely pair [Adam and Eve], I have with conscious dignity, or Satanic pride, turned to hell for sublimer objects" (*RLS* 120). In Wollstonecraft's autobiographical novel, *The Wrongs of Woman*, her heroine is incarcerated in a madhouse, yet defiantly echoes Satan: "my mind is freed, though confined in hell itself."[14] For Wollstonecraft, Satan's dilemma is also women's: "To be weak is miserable, doing or suffering," as Satan said to his fallen comrades (*PL* 1.196). Not Eve and the beautiful, but Satan and the sublime suit Wollstonecraft: it is "the contemplation of the noble struggles of suffering merit," of "an outcast of fortune, rising superior to passion and discontent" that inspired her, and she was not alone (*RLS* 120).

Her Satanic Majesty

Wollstonecraft was among the first in a line of romantic outcasts who modeled themselves on the fallen hero of *Paradise Lost*; Mary and Percy Shelley learned much from her example. If this unabashedly romantic account of a feminist Satanism in the 1790s seems to project a spurious second-generation preoccupation onto an earlier tradition, that is because, I suggest, we have grown too familiar with the received account of a monological romantic Satanism. As we know, and as we know the romantics knew, *Paradise Lost* voiced "a polyphony of rival, ambivalent, anguished, and nostalgic imperatives, whose tropes no hermeneutical methodology to this day has been able to silence."[15] Yet one particularly anguished imperative that inspired romantic women writers—Satanic

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rebellion as feminist struggle—remains neglected, overshadowed by the equally significant, competing fascination with Eve's plight. Margaret Homans traced the rise of nineteenth-century women poets through their association with Eve: "To become poets, women must shift from agreeing to see themselves as daughters of nature and as parts of the world of objects to seeing themselves as daughters of an Eve reclaimed for their poetry."[16] I suggest that an alternative genealogy of nineteenth-century women's poetry emerges if we look to Satan, not Eve, as their poetic predecessor.

Like Wollstonecraft, whom they admired, Robinson and Smith were drawn to Milton's Satan as a powerful emblem not only of women's struggle against sexual tyranny, but also of genius's struggle for recognition. Writing in the counter-revolutionary climate of the 1790s, these radical writers forged significant links between Satan and outcast (distinctly female) poetic genius, simultaneously allying themselves with a romantic vision of Milton as embattled and fallen republican. Fallenness and exile were the dominant themes of Smith's works, through which she developed a universalist vision of suffering that deliberately cut across national, class, and sexual lines.

In her novel of European dislocation during the revolutionary wars, *The Banished Man* (1794), Smith elevates the plight of the French émigrés to the epic scale of *Paradise Lost.* As in conservative fiction, the villain embodies Satan's calculating and selfish aspects: "Thrown by his birth at a great distance from the eminence he desired to aspire to, and apparently condemned, . . . his ambitious spirit soared above his obscure lot, and he had neither feelings or principles likely to check any means, however daring or however immoral, which that spirit might prompt him to use for his exaltation."[17] This demonic Jacobin, the Abbé Heurthofen, is a foil to the heroic aristocrat d'Alonville, who joins the nobility of the fallen angel to the pathos of the exiled Adam. Fleeing from revolutionary France, d'Alonville tries to rally fellow outcast aristocrats in Coblenz, much as Satan had rallied the fallen angels. Yet Smith simultaneously likens him to Adam: "He began anew to consider wh[i]ther he should go: . . . '*The world was all before him where to chuse,*' but no part of it offered to him, '*a place of rest*'" (*BM* 1.209). As "a wanderer upon the earth," d'Alonville joins the ranks of Smith's numerous exiled protagonists, the author included, as her autobiographical character suggests: "My children and I have also become exiles," and "are now banished from the rank of life where fortune originally placed us" (*BM* 2.190, 205).

Perhaps the most spectacular fall in the 1790s was that of Marie Antoinette, and it should come as no surprise that we find allegories of the fallen queen as the fallen Satan. In *The Emigrants,* the defeated Marie

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Antoinette is at once a suffering mother, the victim of a corrupt system, and the fallen Lucifer who aspired to "a throne / Where boundless power was thine, and thou wert rais'd / High (as it seem'd) above the envious reach / Of destiny!" (*E* 2.155–59). Smith alludes to Isaiah 13–14, where Lucifer is cast down for having "said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." "But eminence Of misery is thine," concludes Smith, anticipating Byron, and echoing Satan's complaint that "[t]he lower still I fall, only supreme / In misery" (*E* 2.173–74; *PL* 3.91–2). For the republican Helen Maria Williams also, Marie Antoinette's "haughty indignant spirit" after Louis XVI's execution resembled Satan's: were Marie Antoinette faced with execution, she "would probably meet death with becoming dignity," agreeing with Satan that "to be weak is to be miserable."[18]

Like Williams, Smith was a republican sympathizer, yet she nevertheless found in the Queen's "eminence of misery" and in her own consciousness of "superior worth" a powerful link to the original outcast (and thus the "original" republican author).[19] Both Marie Antoinette and Smith's Abbé Heurthofen in *The Banished Man* share an ambition for preeminence possible only through such rigid hierarchies as the Catholic church or absolutist monarchy (or British patriarchy, Smith implies), systems of "legal crimes" and "regal crimes" in *The Emigrants.* Yet, undeniably Smith herself exhibits a similar sense of entitlement in her accounts of her own economic downfall and unsuccessful efforts to regain her original class, one not fully explained by her need to support her children. Like Robinson, who in some respects aspired to aristocracy (in an intellectual and cultural sense), Smith found in such fallen figures as the French aristocrats an allegory of her own struggle, both economic and intellectual. Heurthofen's is the demonic inversion of this struggle, yet even in him we glimpse genius thwarted: "[H]e sought more ardently than ever for occasions to raise himself above the humiliating situation, where his dependence seems to counteract perpetually the ascendancy of his talents" (*E* 1.112). As both a humiliated "outcast of fortune" and a genius dependent on patrons and hierarchies, Smith shares much with the conflicted portraits of Satanic exile in *Paradise Lost, The Emigrants,* and *The Banished Man.*

Marie Antoinette's pride thus became an allegory of the "conscious dignity" of romantic female genius. Smith had similarly echoed Milton's Satan in her sonnet "Written in September 1791, during a remarkable thunder storm," when she elevated her own ambitious perspective to that of "a spirit conscious of superior worth, / In placid elevation firmly great."[20] Smith alludes to the unrepentant Satan's high self-worth, a bold claim to a Miltonic inheritance:

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> Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
> Above his fellows, with monarchial pride
> Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake. (*PL* 2.427–9)

Rallying the outcast angels to seek their original power, Satan suits undismayed feminists like Smith and Wollstonecraft who similarly urged women, as the "progeny of heav'n," to seek "transcendent glory" (*PL* 2.430–3). In 1792, Wollstonecraft alluded to this same passage in *Paradise Lost* when she, with "conscious dignity, or Satanic pride, turned to hell for sublimer objects." It is in this model, distinct from the idealization of Eve, I suggest, that we find a romantic and feminist vision of women's poetic genius as Satanic.

Smith and Williams alluded to Milton's Satan in their ambivalent descriptions of the fallen but undismayed Marie Antoinette, and it is no surprise that Mary Robinson had the most to say on this pairing. In her *Memoirs* and *A Monody to the Memory of the Late Queen of France,* Robinson forged important links between the fallen queen, the fallen woman, and the female poet. One unexamined aspect of Robinson's affinity for Marie Antoinette, as she elaborated in her feminist *Letter to the Women of England* (1799), is their shared fate as unabashed female genius, "hurled from the most towering altitude of power."[21] As the spectacular embodiment of feminized genius, Marie Antoinette shares with Satan

> the proud supremacy of WORTH;
> Its blest dominion vast and unconfin'd,
> Its CROWN ETERNAL, and its THRONE THE MIND! . . .
> That RANK should be a CRIME, and GENIUS hurl'd
> A mournful wand'rer on the pitying world![22]

Marie Antoinette is here conflated with the poet of genius, Robinson herself, and both pursue the "proud supremacy of worth" that Milton's Satan claimed (for example, *PL* 2.5–10).

Robinson was the object of sexual scandal (as a former royal mistress), and believed herself the latest in a long line of "fallen" women, including Sappho and Marie Antoinette, unjustly denied the public recognition their talent merited. In her correspondence with William Godwin, she defended this sense of righteous indignation: "You accuse me of cherishing a discontented Spirit," she writes, but if Godwin too had been "[h]urled from the most flattering prospects of Delight and Fortune, to contemplate a long and dreary perspective, which only the Grave could terminate, would not your spirit, like my own, be weary of its journey?"[23] Cast out like Satan from the height of ambition to "yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild" (*PL* 1.180), Robinson in her private correspondence echoes the archangel ruined: "You see me but a wreck." Yet in the *Memoirs* Robinson was writing at this same time, she presented

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Satan's unrepentant self-worth to her public audience, as Satan had done in rallying his troops and his own flagging spirits: "Though fallen in fortune," she writes defiantly, "I was still high in pride."[24]

Robinson's unabashed pursuit of fame and "radiant knowledge" makes her a central figure in the feminist Satanism I have traced in women's writings throughout the turbulent 1790s. This Satanic feminism was recognized as such by conservative writers like More and West, who deliberately allied women's pursuit of forbidden knowledge with the fallen angel. In West's *Tale of the Times*, the fallen heroine admits she abandoned her husband for fame: "The love of fame was, I own, my predominant error. Impelled by this powerful passion, I pursued distinction" (2.332). Eve's choice, like Satan's before her, was, according to these Christian conservatives, a choice between love and fame. In the second half of this paper, I turn to this ubiquitous theme—love vs. fame—in nineteenth-century women's poetry in order to suggest a major redirection of how we read this opposition.

One popular figuration of this conflict was through the myth of the Lost Pleiad, a star cast out of the heavens because she loved a mortal man. The Lost Pleiad's choice of love over fame, I suggest, is not the crippling denunciation of public poetic aspiration that it appears to be in many modern readings of the "poetess" phenomenon. If we look closely at women's poems of fallen stars and fallen poetesses, we see also their continuing interest in the fallen Satan as outcast genius. West pointed us in this direction in 1799, when she likened her heroine's death in *Tale of the Times* to a falling star, via this epigraph from Rowe's *Tragedy of Jane Shore*: "In vain look back to what she was before; / She sets, like stars that fall, to rise again no more" (3.277). The Satanic fall through intellectual pride became feminized as the Fallen Pleiad, losing her celestial purity through love of mortal masculinity, a transformation with surprising repercussions for both romantic Satanism and nineteenth-century women's poetry. The feminist Satanism I have traced through women's writings of the 1790s established a significant link between this overtly politicized generation and later writers like Felicia Hemans, Letitia Landon, and Mary Ann Browne.

The War in Heaven: Love vs. Fame

Jane Taylor's "Love and Fame" superimposes the love/fame opposition onto the narrative of the fall, so that the biblical significance of this opposition becomes clearly legible. In Taylor's verse fable, a maiden who "wandered alone" is wooed in an Edenic "deep serene seclusion" by "two gentle strangers," Love and Fame.[25] While Love "spoke of pains and sighs, / His rival talked of glory": boasting of "hope and pride," Fame emerges the victor even though his duplicity is clear (to the poet and

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reader). Love warns him that such a union is unnatural: "You may perchance her favor buy; / But nature sanctions not the tie." Thus the alliance between Eve and Satan (unsanctioned by God) leads directly to the woman poet's choice of Fame over Love (unsanctioned by nature).

Corinne remains the most influential source for disseminating the love/fame dilemma among nineteenth-century British women poets. De Staël's novel established poetic tableaus such as "Corinne Crowned at the Capitol," which echo throughout the works of Landon, Hemans, and Barrett Browning as iconic visions of female genius. *Corinne's* tragic narrative, in which the woman artist chooses fame and is rejected by her lover in favor of her domestic sister, grounds women's genius in the fictional tradition of Sappho established by Ovid. This "Sapphic" version of the love/fame dilemma, inspiring such masterpieces as Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon*, Hemans's "Prosperzia Rossi," and Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, has emerged in modern feminist criticism as the master narrative of nineteenth-century women's poetry as a "destructive repetition of the Sappho myth" which poets progressively overcome, beginning with Barrett Browning.[26] Yet a parallel version of this dilemma, not Sapphic but Satanic, also established a significant, hitherto neglected, tradition in nineteenth-century women's poetry. In this version, a different fall—Satan's, not Sappho's—features prominently, and the dangerous passion pursued is likewise forbidden—knowledge. Fallen woman and fallen angel, I suggest, share important affinities.

Wollstonecraft and Robinson had turned a sexualized fall—Eve's and Sappho's—into a politicized one: Satan's. West and More, in contrast to these sexually scandalous feminists, maintained scrupulously asexual professional reputations, and wanted to redeem Eve's reputation as well. Writing in an even less tolerant sexual climate, later writers like Browne, Hemans, and Landon could not afford the sexual controversies that embattled 1790s feminists had weathered (as the self-exiled Landon discovered to her dismay). In their poems on female genius, they turned instead to a popular, sentimentalized version of the angelic fall for love, in which the unmistakable echoes of Satan's rebellion can still be heard.

Paradise Lost established an enduring version of the fall (both of humanity and the angels) that departs from biblical accounts in significant ways. The Bible does not tell of a war in heaven, though isolated passages have been linked in rabbinical and Christian writings to generate different accounts of angelic rebellion. Milton's Satan fell through pride (or desire for knowledge and liberty, depending on one's angelic or satanic allegiance). But the Bible does not tell this story, nor does it identify Satan as the serpent in Genesis. Genesis does tell a story regarding the fall of the angels, though in this account, the angels (sons of God) fell through love of mortal women (daughters of men): "That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:2).

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It is important to remember that these two accounts of the fall of the angels—one popularized by Milton, the rebellion of the angels led by Satan, the other elaborated from Genesis and other ancient texts—are independent of each other. According to Milton's chronology, Satan's fall preceded that of Eve and Adam, and helped to inspire it. In the Genesis account, expanded in the works of the church fathers, medieval theologians, and the pseudepigraphic Book of Enoch, the angels fall through love/lust for mortal women, generations after Adam and Eve have left Eden. Both these accounts of the fall of the angels were available to the women poets I turn to now, but it is important to note how one account offers pride/knowledge as the forbidden object, while the other offers love. These desires are connected, but it is significant to note the prevalence of the fall for love/lust theme in women's poetry of the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, while earlier feminists like Wollstonecraft had looked to (and been depicted as) the Miltonic fallen angel as thief of knowledge.[27]

Women's accounts of the Lost Pleiad (Merope),[28] a star who fell from the Pleiades constellation because of her love for a mortal man, can be read as retellings of the fall of the angels. "The Lost Pleiad" poems of Landon and Hemans may appear to be only variations on the Sappho/Corinne fall of female genius for love of man, in which the woman artist is destroyed by the mutually exclusive demands of love and fame. Such readings can authorize a teleology of nineteenth-century women's poetry in which this impossible fame/love dilemma cripples "precursors" and "poetesses" like Hemans and Landon, while Victorian poets like Barrett Browning and Michael Field appear as true "poets" who transcend this destructive patriarchal ultimatum, both biographically and poetically. Within what appears as a crippling denunciation of women's fame—the Lost Pleiad who falls, like Sappho/Corinne, through love for a man—is folded another ancient story, one that likens the fallen woman to the fallen angel.

I suggest that poets of the 1820s and 1830s took up the Lost Pleiad as a feminized version of the Genesis account of the fall of the Watcher angels, in which women's superior capacity for love is elevated to divine proportions, inviting divine retribution. A myth serving misogynist ends in rabbinical and early Christian writings—female sexuality corrupts even the (male) angels—becomes in women's imaginations a defiant meditation on the superiority of feminine love, with echoes of that other angelic rebellion. As a fallen star, the Lost Pleiad harks back to the rebel Satan, also known as Lucifer, the Day-Star. The Christian Satan is an amalgam of biblical and pagan fragments, appearing in biblical accounts as fallen angel, falling lightning, and fallen or wandering star. Isaiah 12–14 is one such fragment, in which "the King of Babylon is addressed as a defeated rebel"—Lucifer, meaning Day-Star or morning-star, because he rivaled the Sun by remaining in the morning sky (*SE* 51):

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How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer [Day-Star], son of the morning! *how* thou art cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Marie Antoinette, like this defeated king, had held quasi-divine power before being cast down, sharing with feminists who pursued forbidden knowledge a Luciferan fall. As well as the rebellious Day-Star Lucifer, Satan appears as falling lightning, according to Christ: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10.18). The book of Jude provides another cognate for the rebel angels: "wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever" (Jude 13). Whether falling lightning, fallen stars, or wandering stars, these biblical cognates for the rebel angels recur throughout women's poems of Lost Pleiades, an evocation of poetic ambition connecting these poets to the feminist Satanism of Smith, Robinson, and Wollstonecraft.

The Lost Pleiades

Then first I saw him in the Zenith as a falling star.
—William Blake, *Milton, A Poem*

The poetic resonances of the Pleiades are centuries old, naming poetic circles in ancient Alexandria and sixteenth-century France, the latter Pléiade defiantly writing in vernacular French, not Latin. Little wonder then that Hemans used the Pleiades to commemorate Byron's death in "The Lost Pleiad" (1823). A meditation on the "[c]anonized saints who inhabit the heavens of poetry," as Jerome McGann argues, Hemans's poem connects the fallen woman to the fallen Byron: Merope's forbidden love precipitated her fall, while Byron's erotic transgressions led to an even greater fame, though perhaps not a lasting one.[29] For McGann, "in a context where the central subject is poetic fame, 'the lost Pleiad' becomes a sign of the poet—including the male poet—as woman" (162). In 1850, the fall of another Satanic poet, Edgar Allan Poe, also saw him likened to Merope, again by a woman poet. In "The Lost Pleiad—Edgar A. Poe," Mrs. H. Marion Stephens laments Poe as a "truant star" whose "soul was love:" though "tempest-riven," he is, the sentimental poet hopes, redeemable—"Be all his faults forgiven!"[30] That Poe and Byron each appeared in women's poems as the sentimental Lost Pleiad, "whose soul was love," establishes at once the sign of the poet as woman, as McGann has shown, and the sign of the woman poet as Satanic.

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In Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley's 1833 "The Lost Pleiad," these Satanic echoes of the fallen star were even more audible. This poem is remarkable for its searching, unanswered questions regarding the actual fall of the "abstracted star," which the poet addresses as "O, thou / Bright, awful denizen of eternity:"

> Throughout what realms interminably spread,
> And what stupendous heights and depths afar
> Hast thou careered in glory, thou lost star?[31]

Stuart-Wortley focuses on the "stupendous heights and depths" of poetic aspiration, on the romantic poet as "careered in glory," while feminizing this sublime figure as the Lost Pleiad.

Eliza Mary Hamilton's "The Moon Seen by Day" (1838) evokes this Satanic affinity with the woman poet even more elegantly. Hamilton addresses the woman poet's pained presence in the public sphere: as unnatural as the moon seen in the "foreign fields of day," the public poet is also likened to a feminized Lucifer: "thy daring flight, / Weak, lovely rival of the unenvying sun!"[32] At first "a white violet, beaten by the rain," the moon begins to resemble the proud morning-star:

> What likeness, as I gaze, grows clear the while
> In thine to other features, —, of a fate
> As high, as strange, as proudly desolate? (ll. 45–47)

Like Stuart-Wortley, Hamilton leaves these questions unanswered. In "A Young Girl Seen in Church" (1838), Hamilton presented another portrait of woman as a star, on the brink of falling under the pressure of the poet's erotic gaze: "I gazed and gazed as though she were a star, / Unconscious and unfallen, which shone above, afar" (*P* 184–85). Hamilton's fascination with stars stems in part from the influence of her brother, the Royal Astronomer of Ireland, who had sought her "sympathy and assistance" in his studies: "I must seek to pierce the cloudy veil within which dwells the genius of the place, dark with excessive light; but *you* need not lose sight of earth, of the prospects and beauties of the valley."[33] Instead of becoming her brother's helpmeet, Hamilton left behind the "beauties of the valley" to travel to the Near East and pursue publication, despite Wordsworth's advice to the contrary; "The Moon Seen by Day" charts her "daring flight."

By feminizing Satan in his doomed struggle against superior force, Hamilton and Stuart-Wortley elevate to heroic status the defeats of their quintessentially "feminine" poetesses, figured as rain-beaten flowers and heart-broken divinities. The resulting cross-fertilization of seemingly separate spheres of gendered poetry—defiant Satanism vs. affectionate poetess—reveals the power of the latter to effect a "feminization of

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culture at large," as Marlon Ross has argued regarding Hemans's intention.[34] In 1831 Maria Jane Jewsbury similarly admired Hemans for her ability to fuse "the poetry of men and women," so that "occasionally we reciprocate their respective influence, by discerning the beauty of power, and feeling the power of beauty."[35] The Satanic aura surrounding such fallen figures as the Lost Pleiad empowers these visions of vanquished beauty, while simultaneously feminizing the angelic rebellion as a fall for love, making beautiful what appears as quintessentially masculinist.

The Satanism suffusing women's poetry of fallen genius in the 1820s and 1830s signals an innovative accomplishment, and as such is comparable (and indebted) to women's earlier uses of Satan's rebellion to symbolize a feminist intellectual struggle. Their Satanism stands in marked contrast to Shelley and Byron's uses of this motif to engage with the reform movement's battles with blasphemy charges, in other words, to "romantic Satanism" as it is currently defined.[36] The conflict preoccupying the leading female poets of the 1820s and 1830s was one imposed on them by their contemporaries, enforcing an adherence to domestic ideology, but also an internalized one, inherited from the Pauline injunction against women's public speech, and compounded by the generalized temptation of *vanitas mundi.* As women poets rose to increased prominence in print culture in the 1820s and 1830s, this "feminization of poetry" prompted anxious responses from male poets, as Ross, Carol Christ, and Sonia Hofkosh have demonstrated. Along with their Lost Pleiad poems, women's love/fame poems addressed the hostility their growing professionalization attracted, using the misogynist framework of the fall in surprising ways. Their name is legion: Barrett Browning's "The Vision of Fame" (1826) and *Aurora Leigh* (1857); Hemans's "Woman and Fame" (1829), "Corinne at the Capitol" (1827), "Prosperzia Rossi" (1828), and "The Grave of a Poetess" (1828); Landon's "The History of the Lyre" (1829) and "Corinne Crowned at the Capitol" (1832); Caroline Norton's "The Poet's Choice" (1840); and Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862). Rehearsing this painful temptation, so clearly laid out in Taylor's "Love and Fame," these poems typically denounce the *vanitas* concealed in fame, either choosing "home-born love"[37] or demonstrating the disastrous effects of women's fame. Either course ironically increases the poet's continuing commercial success and fame. Traced through Corinne and Sappho, as these poets generally directed through their imbricated epigraphs and allusions, this crippling choice is woman's only, Eve's first and only choice. Traced through the Satanism also inherited from their female predecessors and male contemporaries, "love vs. fame" achieves the sublime status of cosmic crisis, a return to the original choice, Satan's. This

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Satanic version of the poetess's fall simultaneously feminizes the original fallen angels into figures of female genius whose superior powers of affection (like their forbidden pursuit of fame) defy the boundaries of private and public, human and divine, transforming them, in Landon's words, into "the banished of another sphere."[38]

I turn now to the ambivalent evocations of Satanic ambition in the poetry of Mary Ann Browne. Deeply read in Shelley and Byron (her first two books of poetry were titled *Mont Blanc* and *Ada*), Browne published eight volumes of verse from the late 1820s until her death in 1845, and like Landon was popularly acclaimed as a sentimental "poetess" and prodigy. Significantly, in "Stanzas to the Author of 'Mont Blanc,' 'Ada,' etc." (1829), Landon presents Browne with this love/fame dilemma: either "Unstring thy lute, and close thy page, . . . Or trust thee to thy soaring wing."[39] "'Tis a hard choice," warns Landon, and ends the poem with a temptation—"Choose."

Landon's own "Lost Pleiad" poem was published in the same 1829 volume as her tribute to Browne, part of a small group of early poems that most modern critics have focused on almost exclusively in their evaluation of Landon as the quintessential "poetess," ultimately destroyed by her internalization of the Corinne/Sappho myth and its love/fame binary. In Landon's "The Lost Pleiad," the fallen star's destruction enacts the "depth of woe" women like Sappho and Corinne experience in a sexual economy fueled by male inconstancy: "Love is of heavenly birth, / But turns to death on touching earth" (2.475–60).[40] In later works like "The Enchantress" (1833), Landon revised the myth of woman's fall by creating a Satanic heroine who claims both the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and of the Tree of Life, refusing God's false choice between the two. The Enchantress's bold reimagination of this choice achieves an immortality that eluded previous "heroes" and "sages" (and Adam and Eve), yet leads her ultimately to the "dark and measureless future" of all illuminated romantics.[41] Yet even in Landon's early poem to Browne, she had subtly disrupted the love/fame opposition by inverting her Pleiad's choice: in her "Stanzas" to Browne, the choice is between *earthly* love ("life's more quiet happiness") and *heavenly* fame ("its wild dreams"). Yet earthly love only "*seems* like sacred ground," and Landon warns that it is as insubstantial as any of the "poet's vain imaginings." Throughout Landon's writing, earthly and divine love reflect each other's insubstantiality, and are ultimately as vain as the wild dreams of fame; choosing between them repeats Eve's disastrous choice between being good and being wise. Browne's own revision of Eden, "The Remembrance of a Dream," had imagined a paradise beyond such apparent contradictions, where "[t]here were none to watch us," and "we were good and wise."[42] As in Landon's "The

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Enchantress," Browne's ideal rejects God's mutually exclusive opposition between being good and being wise; it is the Serpent's vision of Eden.

Landon's poetic tribute had consciously evoked the dominant metaphors of Browne's poems—forbidden flight and dangerous illumination, a Prometheanism shared with Byron, Shelley, and Landon. Following a religious awakening in 1832,[43] Browne returned repeatedly to the themes of forbidden flight and ambition, in the process reworking the myths of the fall (both angelic and human) in Genesis (LM 365). She shows herself repeatedly tempted by dreams of poetic power, in which poetic and spiritual immortality are interchangeable. Like Barrett Browning (and Aurora Leigh), Browne ostensibly chooses Christian love over Satanic fame, but she goes further than Barrett Browning in revealing the dangerous affinity between Satan's aspirations and the (female) poet's. Browne's Satan is the sublime hero of *Paradise Lost,* which she had discovered before her conversion, through her friendship in 1830 with John Martin, the preeminent painter of the Miltonic sublime.[44] It is this strain of romantic Satanism, first established through her reading of Byron and Shelley, that battles Browne's later attempts to rein in poetic ambition with Christian humility. While this Christian restraint is often voiced via the "love vs. fame" opposition preoccupying the "poetess," beneath it is still visible the earlier opposition of Angelic vs. Satanic that Browne cannot fully renounce, nor (unlike Barrett Browning) happily resolve.

In biblical, classical, and modern contexts, Browne is repeatedly drawn to allegories of forbidden aspiration and subsequent falls. "Babel," "The Flight of Daedalus and Icarus," and "The Queen of the Desert," commemorating the death of Lady Hester Stanhope, all illustrate the pleasures of ambitious ascent. Central to this tradition of forbidden flight is Eve's dream in *Paradise Lost,* wherein Satan tempts her with divine ascent:

> Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
> Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined,
> But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
> Ascend to heav'n, by merit thine. (*PL* 5.77–80)

Once Eve tastes the fruit, she flies with Satan "Forthwith up to the clouds, . . . wond'ring at my flight and change / To this high exaltation" (*PL* 5.86–90). To "Ascend to heaven, by merit thine," is precisely what feminists like Robinson, Wollstonecraft, and Smith intended to do. Browne is similarly drawn to this ascent by merit, but she checks herself after the fact (after the flight) as if guiltily acknowledging Raphael's warning later in book 5:

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> . . . perhaps
> Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
> Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend
> Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
> Here or in heav'nly paradises dwell;
> If ye be found obedient. (*PL* 5.493–501)

Poetic flight traverses a dangerous threshold between the heavenward flight of an obedient Christian and the forbidden (self-willed) "high exaltation" Eve and Satan enjoyed before their respective falls. Even Daedalus's desire to free his son from "the prison labyrinth" cannot authorize his "faithless pinions" (the morning-star's presence in the sky signals why).[45] "Wings like yours have cause to dread the burning test of noon," warns Browne, speaking at once to this classical overreacher and to his biblical and romantic counterparts, herself included.

"A Vision of Power"

Browne's most remarkable poem of forbidden flight is "A Vision of Power," published two years after her Christian conversion and addressing professional success as an otherworldly dream quest, eerily illuminated by lightning and stars, which "kept still watch, like seraph's eyes." Browne charts a young poet's boundless ambition:

> I longed for fame—I longed to be
> More than a woman e'er had been;
> To have a burning destiny,
> As lightning bright and keen.[46]

The poet achieves a global fame: translated "In every nation's tongue," her works "o'er the wondering crowd were hurled, / Like lightnings through the night." Yet Browne's spirit aspires beyond earthly fame:

> It craved for more,—a fame like mine
> To other minstrels might be given,
> And I might fall from my proud shrine,
> As falls a star from heaven.

Browne's poet is at once Hemans's Lost Pleiad, displaced from the constellation of fame, and the fallen Lucifer, cast out for aspiring too high. Unlike Sappho/Corinne, this female poet sings not of love, but like Wollstonecraft, Shelley, and other Satanic Jacobins, of liberty:

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I spoke before the noon of day,
I stood beneath my native sky,
And, flinging woman's fears away,
I spake of liberty,
Of slavish fear, of bonds of men,
Of justice, and of human laws;
And oh, how thrilled my feverish brain,
When burst the loud applause!

The poet becomes "empress of the world," but finds her desires as infinite as her powers:

Aye, it was torture—burning hell,
To think that all that could be gained,
All that seemed unattainable,
Already was attained!
And now to be alone, alone—
A being placed above my kind,
A helpless idol on my throne,
With nought to feed my mind;
No sweet affection, no pure stream,
Where I might turn aside and drink!
Oh, even in my baseless dream,
How my chilled heart did shrink!
I looked on many a subject's hearth,
And envied bliss I was denied;
The children's laugh of careless mirth,
By love so sanctified.

The poet of "A Vision of Power" resembles Christ tempted by Satan atop the temple, and also Eve (whom Satan addresses as "empress of this fair earth") in her dream flight. But the accumulated echoes of falling lightning, fallen stars, and insatiate desire liken her most to Satan himself. Satan's jealous "lover's hell" in envying Adam and Eve "Imparadised in one another's arms" (*PL* 5.450; 4.506), becomes for Browne a mother's hell, overlooking an "envied bliss I was denied, / The children's laugh of careless mirth, / By love so sanctified."

In Browne's self-referential "Vision," the poet's "agony" derives not from excess, but a Satanic "fierce desire . . . still unfulfill'd" (*PL* 4.509–11): "nought to feed my mind," and likewise "no sweet affection." Like Laura in *Goblin Market*, the poet acquires an absolute thirst in a finite world.[47] And like "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" and *Goblin Market*, "A Vision of Power" resists closure, because in retelling the "truthful misery" the poet relives it:

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I flung me down in agony—
The scorching of my throbbing brain
Was such a truthful misery,
I feel even now the pain.

"Truthful misery" is the state in which the poet leaves us, a fortunate fall achieved "with such wild pain" that at last her "strange vision broke." We can frame the poem using the external Christian consolations (the dark night of the soul) that Browne no doubt sought, yet within this remarkable poem there exists no redemption, only a broken vision. Here, it is a feminized Satan, or Satanic "poetess," who seduces the world with talk of liberty, suffers an "envied bliss I was denied," and is flung down in agony: "My soul within me was on fire." If Satan represents "the battleground for Milton's quarrel with himself,"[48] then Browne's vision of the female poet likewise turns to Satan to uncover the "truthful misery" of the culturally irreconcilable contradictions (spiritual, sexual, poetic) through which her poetry is forged.

Conclusion

More than twenty years later, *Aurora Leigh* would follow the trajectory (at once Satan's and Corinne's) established by Browne's "Vision of Power," and Barrett Browning would reconcile these contradictions through a Christian redemption:

Art is much, but love is more.
O Art, my Art! thou'rt much, but love is more!
Art symbolizes heaven, but Love is God,
And makes heaven. I, Aurora, fell from mine.[49]

For Browne as for Barrett Browning, poetic genius continues circling between faith and knowledge, love and fame, so that this dialectic is grounded in longstanding Christian prohibitions against (and aspirations towards) knowledge. Celebrating Barrett Browning's "intellectualism and political commitments," her liberating "journey from visions of romance to the truth of real experience,"[50] obscures the Christian sacralization of art central to her work (and canonization): "For we stand here, we, / If genuine artists, witnessing for God's / Complete, consummate, undivided work" (*Aurora* 7.837–9). Barrett Browning is celebrated for having made peace with the love/fame opposition, poetically and personally, yet we need to acknowledge that this was made possible only by a Christian reconciliation, as she wrote in "A Vision of

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Poets" (1844), so "That holy love may hallow fame" (l.984). Browne, Landon, and earlier writers like Wollstonecraft and Robinson remain committed to this poetic dialectic, without refuge in the "The place of rest which is not sin" that Barrett Browning seems to achieve ("Vision of Poets," l.996). Their romantic Satanism (like their varied Christian faiths) shares with Blake's an affinity with contraries, and an antipathy to their reconciliation, as in Blake's insistence on maintaining a dialectic between the devouring and the prolific, the angelic and satanic: "Religion is an endeavour to reconcile the two."[51]

The romantic Satanism I have traced through the first half of the nineteenth century leads us far from the self-destructive legacy of "Milton's Bogey" and "Shakespeare's Sister" prevalent in 1970s and 1980s liberal-feminist literary histories. The groundbreaking studies of Elaine Showalter, Ellen Moers, Margaret Homans, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar, without which my own enquiry would not be possible, established teleological models of the rise of woman's writing in the nineteenth century, implicitly grounded in Virginia Woolf's belated perspective in *A Room of One's Own*. The key figure for Woolf was Barrett Browning, whose self-identification as the first true woman poet, lacking grandmothers and springing fully formed from the Wordsworthian tradition, was also taken at face value by subsequent literary historians: they structured their evolutionary models around the imposing figure of Barrett Browning and her "singular" achievement of self-expression and social consciousness. Angela Leighton's impressive *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart* is a more recent master narrative of nineteenth-century British women's poetry as "a journey from visions of romance to the truth of real experience." These diverse teleologies are largely Victorian in expertise, and were published before the rediscovery of romantic women poets of the last fifteen years. To a significant extent, these critical accounts rely on familiar notions of nineteenth-century literature as progressing from adolescent "romance" to mature "real life," in other words, from romanticism to Victorianism, and, at last, to modernism.

The logic of periodization and canonization drives these feminist master narratives, necessarily distorting the defeated, forgotten, or discredited traditions left in the wake of "progress." By investing in a feminist evolution in which periods and writers (and stages in writers' lives)[52] supersede one another in their inexorable rise to feminist "modernity," such models underestimate the historical contingency of literary discourse and the canon, as Margaret Ezell has argued. Romantic Satanism persisted in the "Enlightenment" Wollstonecraft, the "romantic" Smith, the "Victorian" Browne. Rather than tracing a progressive flight towards feminist and poetic liberation, romantic Satanism

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confirms an uneven genealogy, a "hazardous play of dominations" in which the end is by no means assured.[53] Barrett Browning may have temporarily fixed this hazardous play so "that holy love may hallow fame," but this "place of rest which is not sin" is neither the *terminus* of women's poetic achievement (as many Victorians believed), nor its origin (as many Victorianists believe) (*LS* 129). If we include Satan's rise and fall among the precedents for women's literary struggles, Corinne and Sappho become alternate axes around which to organize our genealogies, not the starring heroines in a linear history.

Throughout the nineteenth century, feminist Satanism continued to haunt women's self-critical explorations of poetic ambition, as in Adah Isaacs Menken's "Aspiration" (1868), Emily Pfeiffer's "Aspiration" (1876), Mary Coleridge's "A Clever Woman" (1883), E. Nesbit's "Under Convoy" (1886), and Amy Levy's "Oh, Is It Love?" (1889). We could read much of Emily Brontë's poetic oeuvre under the sign of this Satanism. Amy Levy's deceptively simple questions in "Oh, is it Love?" illustrate the complexity of this persistent dialectic in nineteenth-century imaginations, its opposition grown nearly indistinguishable:

> O is it Love or is it Fame,
> This thing for which I sigh?
> Or has it then no earthly name
> For men to call it by?[54]

Levy revives the tradition of diabolical questions asked by Wollstonecraft, Browne, Hamilton, and Landon: "diabolical" for being literally thrown across in opposition, as opposed to the binding work of the symbolic. Undoing heavenly certainties and earthly illusions was also the devil's work, making the diabolical central to nineteenth-century women's poetry.

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NOTES

1 *Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, vol. 4 (London, 1989), p. 21.

2 Charlotte Smith, *The Emigrants*, book 1, in *Poems of Charlotte Smith*, ed. Stuart Curran (Oxford, 1993), lines 29–34; hereafter cited in text as *E* with book and line number.

3 *Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, ed. James King and Charles Ryskamp, vol. 4 (Oxford, 1984), p. 319.

4 Lucy Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford, 1993), p. 64.

5 On "romantic Satanism" as traditionally defined, see Stuart Curran, "'The Siege of Hateful Contraries': Shelley, Mary Shelley, Byron and *Paradise Lost*," in Joseph Wittreich, ed., *Milton and the Line of Vision* (Milwaukee, 1975), pp. 209–30. Southey's attack on Byron

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in *A Vision of Judgment* (1821) began the critical dispute. For an impressive examination of the "Satanism" of Milton's poem, see Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton, 2003); hereafter cited in text as *SE*.

6 Peter Schock, "*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: Blake's Myth of Satan and its Cultural Matrix," *English Literary History*, 60 (1993), 446.

7 Hannah More, *Strictures on Modern Female Education*, in *Miscellaneous Works of Hannah More* (London, 1840), p. 319.

8 Jane West, *A Tale of the Times*, vol. 2 (London, 1799), pp.120, 119; hereafter cited in text by volume and page number.

9 Anonymous, *Dorothea, or A Ray of the New Light*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1801), p.95; hereafter cited in the text by volume and page number.

10 Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987), pp. 54, 99.

11 More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, quoted in Wittreich, *Feminist Milton*, p.164.

12 Anne Grant, *Letters from the Mountains* (London, 1807), excerpted in *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Adriana Craciun (London, 2002), pp. 48–49; hereafter cited in text as *RLS*.

13 More, *Strictures*, p. 320. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge, (New York, 1975), hereafter cited in text as *PL*, with book and line number.

14 Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*, ed. Gary Kelly (Oxford, 1976), p. 139.

15 Richard Corum, "In White Ink: Milton's Ideas of Women," in *Milton and the Idea of Woman*, ed. Julia Walker (Chicago, 1988), p. 140.

16 Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (Princeton, 1980), p. 216.

17 Smith, *The Banished Man*, vol. 1 (London, 1794), pp. 110–11; herafter cited in text as *BM* with book and page number.

18 Helen Maria Williams, *Letters from France*, ed. Janet Todd (Delmar, N.Y., 1975), vol. 2, part 4, p. 3.

19 On Milton as the "author of authors," see Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tenenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor and the Origin of Personal Life* (Berkeley, 1992).

20 Smith, *Poems*, p. 53. On the poetics and politics of this sonnet, see Kari Lokke, "'The mild dominion of the moon': Charlotte Smith and the Politics of Transcendence," in *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution*, ed. Adriana Craciun and Kari Lokke (Albany, 2001), pp. 85–108.

21 Mary Robinson, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Injustice of Mental Subordination: A Romantic Circles Hypertext Edition* (1998), ed. Adriana Craciun, Anne Close, Megan Musgrave and Orianne Smith, http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/robinson/cover.htm, p. 27.

22 Robinson, *Monody to the Memory of the Late Queen of France* (London, 1793), p. 23.

23 Robinson to William Godwin, 28 August 1800, Bodleian Library.

24 *Perdita: The Memoirs of Mary Robinson*, ed. M. J. Levy (London, 1994), p. 85.

25 *The Writings of Jane Taylor*, ed. Isaac Taylor, vol. 1 (Boston, 1832), pp. 294–96.

26 Margaret Reynolds, "'I Lived for Art, I Lived for Love': The Woman Poet Sings Sappho's Last Song," *Victorian Women Poets: A Critical Reader*, ed. Angela Leighton (Oxford, 1996), p. 302.

27 The account of the Watcher angels' fall also inspired numerous male poets (for example, Moore in *The Loves of the Angels* [1823] and Byron in *Heaven and Earth* [1823]), and was expanded in Laurence's translation of *The Book of Enoch* in 1823. *Paradise Lost* (5.443–50; 11.573–92) and *Paradise Regained* (2.178–81) also referred to the Genesis account of the Watcher angels.

28 The Pleiades were daughters of Atlas and Pleione; the Lost Pleiad was Merope, or, less commonly, Electra. In one version of the myth, Merope fell from the sky through shame of marrying a mortal, Sisyphus; in a different version, Merope was raped by Orion.

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30 Mrs H. Marion Stephens, "The Lost Pleiad—Edgar A. Poe," *Godey's Lady's Book* (1850).
31 Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, "The Lost Pleiad," in *Poems* (London, 1833), lines 38–40.
32 Eliza Mary Hamilton, *Poems* (Dublin, 1838), pp. 1–4; hereafter cited in text as *P.*
33 Quoted in Robert Perceval Graves, *Life of Sir William Rowan Hamilton*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1881), p. 273. See also Virginia Blain, "Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Eliza Mary Hamilton, and the Genealogy of the Victorian Poetess," *Victorian Poetry*, 33 (1995), 31–51.
34 Marlon Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire* (Oxford, 1989), p. 292.
35 Maria Jane Jewsbury, "Literary Sketches No. I: Felicia Hemans," in Felicia Hemans, *Selected Poems*, ed. Gary Kelly (Peterborough, Ont., 2002), p. 465.
36 See Peter Schock, "The 'Satanism' of *Cain* in Context," *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 44 (1995), 182–215.
37 Hemans, "Woman and Fame," *Selected Poems*, p. 351.
38 Letitia E. Landon, "Corinne at the Cape of Misena," *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ed. Jerome McGann and Daniel Reiss (Peterborough, Ont., 1997), p. 145.
39 Landon, "Stanzas to the Author of 'Mont Blanc,' 'Ada,' etc.," *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, p. 132–33.
40 Landon, "The Lost Pleiad," *The Works of Letitia Landon*, vol. 2 (Boston, 1857), lines 475–76.
41 Landon, "The Enchantress," *The Works of Letitia Landon*, vol. 2, p. 174.
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43 "The Late Mrs. James Gray," *Dublin University Magazine*, 29 (March 1847), 369; hereafter cited in text as LM.
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45 Browne, "The Flight of Daedalus and Icarus," *Dublin University Magazine*, 25 (1845), 59–61.
46 Browne, "A Vision of Power," *Romantic Women Poets: Vol. II*, ed. Andrew Ashfield (Manchester, 1998), pp. 170–4. See also Virginia Blain, "'Thou with Earth's Music Answerest to the Sky': Felicia Hemans, Mary Anne Browne, and the Myth of Poetic Sisterhood," *Women's Writing* 2(1995), 251–69.
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